



**STORY COUNTY  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
LISA HEDDENS  
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LATIFAH FAISAL**

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DATE: June 2, 2022

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: Request for Financial Support - Stepping Stones Childcare Center in Slater

I would propose that the board grant \$50,000 in financial support to assist the owners of Stepping Stones Childcare Center for development of a Childcare Center in Slater. This investment would be consistent with the public purpose doctrine as it:

- Promotes economic development – Chapter 15A, Code of Iowa. Would eventually create 30 jobs, not insignificant for a town the size of Slater. As well as providing jobs, the presence of a childcare center can assist in attracting housing development and other businesses. It also does not favor one business over another, as we do not know of any other proposals to develop a childcare center in Slater.
- Serves a public purpose – The Story County Community Health Assessment conducted in 2020 listed childcare as one of the top needs in the county and identified Slater as a “childcare desert.”

At a previous board meeting I mentioned a concern that providing a grant to a private business could in effect turn taxpayer funds into an eventual profit for a private business. I would have been more comfortable with a loan but understand that the SBA loan which the owner is applying for does not allow additional indebtedness (not even a forgivable loan would be allowed). The business owner has stated that she is amenable to the idea of “paying it forward” by providing for a slot or slots for customers who could not pay for childcare any other way.

I would request that the board’s approval, if granted, be conditioned as follows, consistent with public purpose and the need to provide affordable childcare services to residents of Story County:

In recognition of \$50,000 in financial assistance to assist in the development of the Stepping Stones Childcare Center in Slater, Provider will “pay it forward” by providing the equivalent of \$50,000 in a free or reduced-cost slot or slots in accordance with the following criteria:

- Provider will consider applicants who are not eligible for child care assistance through the Iowa Department of Human services.

- Provider will not discriminate against an applicant on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability
- Number of weeks provided to be based on average cost on Provider's sliding fee scale.

I would further recommend that a contract be developed by county staff.

Linda Murken, Board of Supervisors